

For Immediate Release
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Dr. Hiral Tipirneni Criticizes Representative David Schweikert's Vote to Cut Public Health Funding and Other Services

The same day he was unanimously reprimanded by the House, Representative David Schweikert voted to cut \$2.3 billion from the National Institutes of Health – eliminating thousands of medical research grants in the middle of an unprecedented pandemic.

"Rep. Schweikert has a pattern of voting to strip critical funding for our public health system. Not only has he voted to cut funding for the National Institute of Health, but he's voted repeatedly to cut funding for the CDC's Prevention and Public Health Fund, which is critical in maintaining our country's public health infrastructure," said Dr. Hiral Tipirneni. **"We need leaders in Washington who understand the importance of public health and research, and are willing to make the hard choices that strengthen our country when seeking funding sources for other measures, rather than cutting public health funding because it was politically easy to do so. Had this funding been preserved, our country would have been better prepared to deal with the COVID-19 crisis. We must put partisanship aside and work together to ensure we defeat COVID and are better prepared for the next crisis."**

This is far from the first time Schweikert has voted to cut critical public health funding.

The Center for Disease Control's Prevention and Public Health Fund [PPHF] is a critical tool to strengthen and maintain our country's public health infrastructure. The Fund issues hundreds of millions of dollars in grants annually to state and local public health efforts, often comprising the main funding source for these programs. As the Trust for America's Health writes, "without the Fund, current efforts to prevent infectious diseases and chronic illnesses would be crippled," while a 2018 letter from dozens of public health organizations warned that cuts to the fund would imperil "public health laboratory grants to identify risks and prevent infectious diseases."

Rep. Schweikert has taken multiple votes to cut this funding throughout his career:

- 2015- Schweikert voted to eliminate the PPHF as part of a Republican effort to repeal the Affordable Care Act
- 2012- Schweikert voted to cut the PPHF by more than \$6.25 billion
- 2016- Schweikert voted to cut a further \$3.5 billion from the Fund
- 2017- Schweikert voted for a continuing resolution that cut \$750 million from the Fund

Rather than work to fund legislative priorities through responsible means, Schweikert consistently voted to put the PPHF on the chopping block despite its importance, and both Arizona and our country are now paying the price.

As the Associated Press recently reported, since 2010, funding for state public health departments is down 16% per capita nationwide, while that figure for local public health departments has dropped 18%. More than 38,000 public health jobs have been lost since 2008. In Arizona, per capita public health staffing has dropped by 29% since 2010.

Partly due to these cuts, the Trust for America's Health estimated earlier this year that there was an annual shortfall of \$4.5 billion in "in the spending necessary to achieve comprehensive public health capabilities across the nation."